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because this will give him a measure of sacerdotal independence and enhance his reputation for power. Such men will say that the Taro travels like the wind (*bishi* or *pupu*), not with the swiftness of the wind, but with its mystery and invisibility.

It is more usual, however, for the Taro man to admit freely that he has learnt from some other Taro man, though, as we shall see (pp. 34–7), he almost invariably gives an account of a strictly private inspiration as well. He learns the rules of the cult from his preceptor, but for the immanence of the spirit he has only the spirit itself to thank.

So much at present for the native theories of the manner in which the Taro is passed on. In reality the movement has spread in two ways. (*a*) The common way is for travellers or visitors to acquire the cult and return to inaugurate it in their own villagers; this is merely contact transmission. (*b*) The other way is that of active proselytism. One or two examples will illustrate these methods.

(*a*) *Contact Transmission.* A certain Home, Taro man of importance in the Aiga, or middle Opi, district, names as the originator of the cult a woman Simberi, of Gavora, near the Mambare (it will be noted that he does not mention Buninia). From her it was acquired by Seneni of the river Kumusi (an old man, by the way, in whose dour countenance are assembled all the attributes of wizardy, even to a violent squint). By Seneni the Taro was given to Home—at least the rules of the cult were imparted to him, together with the knowledge of certain medicines. (Communication with the spirits is Home's own affair.) There are three men in Home's village who have acquired the Taro from him, and he names three others, in different villages of the Aiga district, who have done the same. Thus the Taro cult passes from man to man, and one village after another becomes a fresh centre of distribution. The Orokaiva are great walkers and much given to visiting their distant relatives. It is in the course of

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such visits—which are often associated with feasts or burials, and accordingly with a good deal of excitement—that the new ideas and practices are so readily acquired.

It is noteworthy that they are passed on very frequently between relatives. We find an instance of a man visiting his wife's brother in sickness and becoming, perhaps against his expectations, a convert to the Taro; of another visiting his mother's people, and returning with the inspiration, which in due course is acquired by his brother-in-law. Examples of this nature are innumerable. It is a case of 'letting your friend in on a good thing'.

(*b*) *Proselytism.* The other method of dissemination is by the active propaganda of the Taro men. This method, although it may attract more notice, has not exerted the same steady pressure as the one above described. The minor cult of Manau (which will be dealt with at a further stage) provides an example. The leaders of it were Dasiga and Bia; a prominent disciple was Yavevi, adopted son of Bia. To extend the influence of the cult, Dasiga, with a large following, descended the coast from Manau by the Mambare mouth to the neighbourhood of Buna (a distance of some sixty miles), and there conducted 'services' in Yavevi's village, creating, one is given to understand, a startling but not very enduring impression.

So again, an interpreter in my employ named Ihipa, who was strongly imbued with the *Diroga* (a variant of the Taro cult which prevails in the southern part of the Division), set himself out in a tactful and unobtrusive way to plant the good seed in the Aiga district, where hitherto the *Diroga* was practically unknown. Almost nightly the boy-house was the scene of a *kasamba*, with its drum-beating and singing, loud, everlasting, and happily not unmusical. Ihipa would occasionally be seized with twitching and shuddering, and various of the younger singers would find themselves unaccountably following his example. Then Ihipa would explain to them that they had the *Diroga*: they were his converts.

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A scene witnessed in the Aiga village of Korisata is typical enough, and will illustrate the way in which the Taro cult advances. A party of visitors had arrived from the lower Kumusi, which is not more than a good day's journey from Korisata. They were of another tribe—Binandele—and the purpose of their visit was principally that of reunion with their Taro friends and propaganda for the cause. They were led by an old man Tevara, a person of some distinction and a doyen of the cult in these parts, and by a village constable named Kove, an unusually volatile and excitable character and well known to the Government for his energy.

It has been pointed out that the Taro cult is divided into a number of sects. The nature of these will be fully treated later on: it is enough at present to say that Tevara was of the *Kaiva* and Kove of the *Kivere* sect, both these words being the names of varieties of the actual taro plant. In Korisata there was already established a branch of the *Kaiva* sect under one Siavije, which though bearing the same name differed in a good many points from the *Kaiva* of the visitors, owing no doubt to a long previous divergence. Lastly there were the new converts to *Diroga*, led by my interpreter Ihipa. Thus there were four parties of Taro men in the village at one time, all united by the good fellowship which is one of the best characteristics of the movement, but all anxious to show themselves off to advantage before the others.

In the first day's demonstration Kove the village policeman was almost alone and quite overshadowed, especially by the young and enthusiastic recruits of *Diroga*. He said he would show them, however, and that night went on to a village a mile or so distant where his own *Kivere* sect was strongly represented. On the morrow, he declared, there would be a 'race', i.e. a competition, to see who danced longer and better, and who were the more numerous.

At about noon next day Kove's party, heavily rein-

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conduct had much more of art in it, and fewer real excesses. Considering that they were mostly novices their performance certainly did them credit. Foremost among them, and evidently very conscious of his own address, was my newly converted cook-boy, who danced far better than he cooked.

While these two parties were in a manner dancing one another down, the *Kaiva* men, though less strongly represented, were not idle. Old Tevara, head of the faction from the Kumusi, carried a magnificent spear, very weighty, and beautifully polished and feathered. This he manipulated as if in a pole dance, and performed graceful little pirouettes with his feet, all of which, to one's surprise, cost him no loss of dignity, although he was an elderly man and a very large one. Circling in and out among the bystanders he would pause from time to time to hold his spear horizontally above their heads, in a manner reminiscent of benediction. Prominent among his followers was his wife, whose movements had more velocity if less elegance, and who continually flicked the spectators with a bunch of the crimson-leafed taro medicine, *Tumeni*.

The local faction of *Kaiva* men had their main representative in Siavije, who, trotting aimlessly hither and thither between the several parties of dancers, and repeating something over and over to himself, acted a part all his own which, it is to be feared, made no great impression on the bystanders.

After the dances, antics, or paroxysms of the several sects had continued for some time, there followed a general pause in which the Korisata people, forming themselves into single file, paraded past the visitors, each man shaking the hand of every visitor in turn as he passed. Then one of the leaders of the *Diroga* delivered a harangue before Kove's party of *Kivure* men. Prancing back and forth before them and menacing them with his spear, after the manner of an Orokaiva who wishes to make his voice heard, he explained the methods of *Diroga*, and bade them

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take no offence at the swift and warlike movements which were so different from their own. Kove's party listened with great attention, punctuating the speech with tattoos on their drums and with the deep-toned cry, uttered simultaneously by all, and resembling a kind of hoot, which is the Orokaiva equivalent for 'hear, hear!' or 'Amen'. Kove the village constable made his address in reply, first insisting on a general silence, which he considered due to his status and uniform, and after that the hosts and guests, mutually satisfied, mingled and fell to upon the real taro.

Such a scene is common enough. It illustrates the keenness which the various sects feel in their Taro, and the welcome which is offered to the apostles. What with these, and with the impressionable character of the native, it is not surprising that a cult, which for whatever reason commends itself to native imagination, should spread rapidly and far.

The actual distribution of the Taro cult is in the main confined to the Orokaiva tribes. Northwards it seems to have stopped short of the Waria people, who while possessing many affinities with the Orokaiva, speak a different language. It is firmly established along the lower Gira, but on the middle Gira it seems to have made small headway, partly because of a minor cult of *Wo-embo*, or 'animal men', a clique of hunting magicians, and partly because of the long-established mission station at Peo.

Commencing from the mouth of the Mambare the movement seems to have spread at first in two principal directions—up the Mambare itself, and southward down the coast. Then it would seem to have penetrated inland from the coast by two principal routes—up the river Kumusi, and up the thickly populated road from Buna through Sangara to Kokoda. To the Aiga, who are a comparatively isolated tribe, the Taro cult has found its way by both these latter routes, from the east via the river Kumusi, and from the south via Wasida, a populous

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a feature of this as of the Taro cult. Since the establishment of the Mission Station at Manau (and later at Duvira) by Mr. S. R. M. Gill, the *jipari* has died out.

One of the important beliefs of the Manau prophets was that the *embo betari*, i.e. the dead, were coming back to visit their living friends. Dasiga had seen in a dream a fleet of steamers and canoes filled with spirits of the dead and cruising off shore at night-time. Bia, and subsequently two other men of Sanananda (another village in which the Manau cult took hold), were favoured with the same vision. But at this distance it is not easy to discover the early tenets of the Manau faith: they are probably confused in the memories even of its foremost exponents. This is especially apparent in the matter of Kekesi, the powerful spirit who watched over Mitre Rock near the Mambare mouth. Although Mr. Chinnery could elicit a circumstantial account of Kekesi, his steamer *Kesi*, and his association with the rites of Manau, yet, after only ten years, the association seems to have been forgotten. I heard no mention of Kekesi at Manau. To this farrago of Christianity at Manau contributions must have come from the long-established but distant Anglican stations at Ambase and St. Andrews, and from the Lutheran station at Morobe; and no doubt some of the aping of European habits was introduced by ex-police and indentured labourers. Nowadays, I believe, the village is wholly Christian.

11. *The Causes of the Taro Movement*

The observed facts of the Taro cult having been dealt with it is now permissible to adopt a more critical or explanatory method. Its origin and dissemination have already been treated descriptively. In this section I propose to reconsider these questions and offer certain comments.

Cultural Mutations. The Taro cult followed so closely on the *Baigona* cult that it is commonly said to have 'taken its place' when the latter was suppressed. There is, it is true, a very wide difference between their respective